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AURELIANA

E. A. R.

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AURELIANA.

AURELIANA.

By

E. A. R.

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Enduring Friends! Dwell not upon this wrong,
Wrought by a selfish amateur of song,
Who, not content to write, sends *you* to read,
The lame effusions that his fancies breed.
—Behold a book!—I ask you not to laugh.
—I know 'twill prove an endless theme for chaff.—
But still to those that smile, O, ye who carp!
To *them* I quote; "Forgive my feeble sway,
And little reck I of the censure sharp
May idly cavil at an idle lay."

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Aureliana.

THE UNIVERSE.

Voice.

Borne upon the wings of thought
By my mental Spirit wrought,
Have I come from farthest distance,
Far beyond the world's existence,
Ere a flash of summer lightning
O'er the far horizon bright'ning
Flickered into dusk again.
Thus the Spirits of the Spheres,
Ere a meteor disappears,
Moving faster than the light,
Baffling every human sight,
Cross the Star-besprinkled main.

Spirit of the System
rises.

Welcome, my home! Scarcely can Time have paced
But half a cycle of the lunar nodes,
Since, by the herald comet summoned hence,
I left all hurried for the council sage
To join my brother Spirits where they sat
In solemn conclave round their Sacred Head.
Full weighty subjects were there to discuss;—
A mighty star disrupted,—vanished,—fled
From out the Universe of living things;—
Lost was the balance; lest chaotic fire,
With whirr of planets and a rush of stars,
O'erwhelmed all Nature to catastrophe;—
Our Pleiad brother summoned to his aid
The constellations' chiefs: we met, and weighed
Our various counsels for the common weal.
Each, with most nice adjustment, trimm'd and steer'd
His proper convoy in an even track
Where no one force excelled. Böotes alone
In anger, jealous of the Pleiad's power,
And to accentuate the first mistake,
Let slip his master-star. At fearful speed

The jaundiced monster now through busy space
Tears ruinous along. Full in his path,
And powerless to withstand the threatened shock,
Lie I and mine;—the weak before the strong.—
Yet what can one poor System Spirit do
Against a chief of great Böotes' power?
Unto my charge one only star is given,
With its attendant train of satellites,
—The whole not equals by a thousandth part
His single messenger.—Appeal is mine.
I will invoke the Universe's Head
To curb his fierce lieutenant's causeless ire,
And from his post of mighty honour shake
That dread example of imperious wrath.
Then will high Justice on th' oppressor fall.
Full in the track of the destroying star
A mightier will stand; and led away,
The great Arcturus, in captivity,
Around his captor with a homage due,
Will fit atonement make. . . .
But will this be?—If Justice is, it will.—
—If not?—Well, in the darkling cosmos round,
Perchance some other small and fitting star
May hap obey my rule, and be to me

Though my dominion, not the less my home.
Enough for Future: for the present time
Suffice it now to dwell upon the Past,
For I must with an ear attentive learn
What facts have happened since my journey sped.
That known, I may my Spirits' views discuss
And hear their wish on this momentous head.
Arise thou centre of my System's life,
On whom its being turns! Old Sol arise!

[*Spirit of the Sun rises.*

Thou Spirit, guardian of the burning sun!
Our high lieutenant! Kingly viceroy!
Lord of the Planets! Fountain head of Life!
Tell what has passed within thy molten sphere
Since last I left thee!

Spirit of the Sun.

Oh, most mighty king!
Since thy departure have I kept my trust
E'en as my wont through Time's long ages past.
Full steady gleam of bright continuous heat
Have I impartial shed o'er space around;
My course unchanged to Hercules doth tend,
My planets round me still encircling rush,

Still 'neath my photosphere unseen I hide,
—A molten mass beneath a shell of flame,—
Still from my body rise huge sheets of fire,
And still in rapid movement round itself
My mass revolving spins.—O'er my bright face
Have sun-spots many passed;—the mighty gaps
Within my coverlet of living fire
Which some eruptions mightier than the most,
Pregnant with thunder of combustion born,
With force terrific rent.—Oft comets too,
—Those weightless wanderers,—have issued out
The tranquil ocean of abyssmal space
Into my small domain: there for a time
They journey'd on; then turning, passed away,
Bound for the regions where perpetual Night
Wrapped in the bosom of Infinity
O'er Emptiness holds sway. No news is mine.
With steady course all featureless has Time
Passed me unnoticed in his onward path.

System Spirit.

My thanks to thee! Well hast thou kept thy trust
Most faithful Spirit;—best of deputies!—
Then was a burden lifted from my mind,

For I have meditated on great things
Since last I left thee, and I fain would miss
The petty troubles that an absence brings.
Yet will I hear each Planet in its turn
And from themselves learn aught that may befit
Myself to rectify. Let Jupiter
The chiefest of thy sons approach me here.
Come thou proud Spirit of the yellow orb!
Thou radiant topaz of the shadowy night!
Chief of my planets!—Belted Jupiter!
—Greatest though young, and bright in being both,—
Speak thou thy history!

Spirit of Jupiter
rises.

Thrice reverenced Lord,
Since thy high pleasure is to bid me speak
I hasten to reply, Within my sphere
The mellowing changes of a ripening orb
Have slowly progressed on. No suddenness
Has marked the gradual growth. Full silently
The years steal by: each seems alike; yet each,
Though in the sequence imperceptible,
Upon my body hath impressed its stamp,
Faint,—yet distinct; slight,—ineffaceable.—

Around my sun have I with faithful step
Paced the long orbit through the distant sky
In uneventful calm, except when once
Athwart my path a flaming Comet lay.
—The frightful emblem streamed across the sky,—
Conscious of right, I still continued on
And clenched the danger with a stubborn hand,
Which ere it felt the menace melted fast
—All but impalpable.—'Tis often thus,
When Danger threatens with her darkest frown,
If boldly met, she vanishes away,
But if avoided, still a terror stands,
Which e'en not present threats the memory.
Full many changes all my moons have run,
At various speed, of various distance born,
Eclipses daily weaving in their course
With subtle movement, till it seemed indeed
They were the shuttles of a wondrous loom
Which as they flashed across each other's path
From Light spun Darkness, and from Darkness, Light.

System Spirit.

'Tis well. Now must thy glorious neighbour speak.
Come mighty Saturn, raise thy regal head!

Appear great Spirit of the shining ring!
My youngest born! Lord of the many moons!
Round whose meridian wheels the hollow disc,
—The thin flat girdle of transparent light
Perchance the shape of space in miniature!—
[*Spirit of Saturn rises.*
What can'st thou say? How passes time with thee?
Dost thou the evil that men say of thee?
—For oft their tales are hard and libellous.—
Speak thou and clear thyself.

Spirit of Saturn.

Transcendant Power,
No change of note has passed within my rule
Whilst thou wert absent hence. With lagging step
Old Time has toiled in his sure course along,
Nor left me changed in any circumstance,
Save that more close my cooling atoms cling,
And density grows more, while size grows less.
My wondrous shape has thrilled the life of spheres,
And unknown terrors, born of Ignorance,
With dusky wing, all through the sable night,
Shroud me with Wonder's coverlet of awe.
Oh Superstition! Reason's bastard son,

Begot at night from intercourse with Fear,
Thou whose dark fetters cramp the greatest minds
Till they decay to dust; and withered, shrink
E'en as the feeblest child's!—Thou leper lie,
The subtlest palsy of all human ills,
That groweth unnoticed 'neath the guise of sense,
Till that false mask wears thinner and more weak,
And forth in all his gruesome nakedness
Blazes the baleful fiend!—Insidious imp,
Why hast thou given to my glorious form
Such arch-satanic character? Why not
Should'st thou have termed me the angelic world?
—High seat of goodness,—round whose radiant throne,
With hands conjoined, involved in mystic dance,
Tripp'd Heaven's fairest maids; who as they sped
In rhythmic ecstacy, their flying feet,
Angelic, struck from out the ether space
Sparks of celestial fire?—My starry path
At least might lend to such a flimsy tale
Thy painted veil of truth.—A fairy ring,—
What augurs that of ill? It rather seems
A radiant halo blessed of holiness,
Which of itself would name aught mortal thing

Beloved of all on High. Yet once again
Thou turn'st thy thoughts to evil. Strange it is
Perverted truth doth love the darker side,
And in dire ghouls and fearful loathsome things
Affrights itself with its own phantasies.
Faith and Imagination, sisters twain
To Superstition, each of Reason born,
—Though that their mothers differed as the Poles,—
(The one dull Obstinacy fixed and slow,
The other Madness as a parent owned),—
With morbid leaning tend to misery.
For where is he who with his inmost mind
Communes in meditation's silent depths,
Who, if he doubts on either destiny,
Would not declare a Heaven *might* exist,
But that a Hell needs be a certainty,
Since though one vision seems a mirage thin,
The other's real, minute, and palpable?
So in our forecasts of futurity
None seem so true as those which end the darkest;
Not one of Hope's delusions ever shines
With such firm vigour of reality
As those dread shadows of a future fate,
Which, though no cause arise to justify,

Still on the soul with leaden pallor press
And threat the mind with dire misgivings so
It needs perforce believe. Such state of things,
Wherein the more incomprehensible
Are doubted far the worse, and things least known
Are treated as most evil, tends to prove
The balance of the world doth lean to ill;
As from experience would suspicion try
To draw the facts to fit an unknown void.

System Spirit.

It is without the compass of my ken.
It may be so. I sometimes think it is.
—What matters it e'en though it may be true,
We cannot change things even if we would;—
Make happiness thine aim, all will be well.
Hail thou great triumph of poor human skill!
Thou climax of Man's great discovery!
Far Neptune, rise! [*Spirit of Neptune rises.*
By what an Ocean thou
In mournful grandeur track'st thy pathless way!
—A silent strand by solemn surges swept!—
—The cold lone shore of dark Infinity,—
Whose noiseless billows are the waves of Time,

Which ever lave thee as a heaving sigh
Pent up, dissolves itself to nothingness!
Speak thou the furthest of my children bright,
—Old Sol's last outpost on the world of space,—
Tell thy condition and thy history.

Spirit of Neptune.

Through one dark night of polar winter, I
Move on unceasingly. No glorious sun
O'er *my* horizon in a flood of light
Uprises red to marshall in the day;
Perpetual Night invests me with a pall
Of utter darkness, spangled o'er with light
Sent to me from far distance;—from the clouds
Of twinkling stars across the nether sea,—
—And from the sun, with which no difference shows,
—To all appearance but a Sirius.—
My only moon attends me constantly,
And to my loneliness may serve to lend
Some show of company. 'Tis but a show.
I am the hermit of the Universe.
On either hand an empty wilderness,
So boundless, that of all, two things alone

Can span the distance under countless years,
And probe the deep abysses of the gulf
Where Heat dies fainting, and entangled Light
Scarce struggles forth in lambent flickerings.
—Those mighty two are Thought and Gravity.—
Oh, what a spot to joy a recluse's heart!
—Poised on the borders of the great Unknown,
Where thoughts may ponder in deep reverie,
Rocked on the bosom of a silent sea
Which buoys and lulls the sense with cadence sweet
To unwill'd Rhythm's softest harmony,
Till the whole soul forsakes its earthly shell
And blissful floats amid the vast serenity.—
Long vigil have I kept through ages past
By this dark, deep, and vast profound;
Where break the billows of advancing Time
Into a silent surf; forlorn and lone;
Till my cold body yearns to teem with life
Beneath the warmth of Sol's all giving rays.
Now numb and cold, things crystalline alone
Replace the vigour of a quicker life,
—All dull and dim,—yet ready even now
To blossom forth beneath a pleasant warmth,
Should such a happiness by chance befall.

System Spirit.

Time.—Time brings all things round, and in his train
Follows full much scarce hoped on. Things that yet
Seem of all others most improbable,
Some day will blazon forth as clear hard facts,
Solid in substance, undeniable,
Which to have doubted on seems wondrous strange.
Rise Uranus, thou Planet retrograde!
King George's Star, advance thy long hid form,
The paradox of planetary space!
[*Spirit of Uranus rises.*
Speak, thou renowned of Herschel!

Spirit of Uranus.

Reverenced Lord,
What would'st thou of thy humble worshipper?

System Spirit.

Thy news.

Spirit of Uranus.

Great Sire, I have none. Not to me
Has aught befallen of a record worth
Recountment to your Highness. Ever still
I roll my backward orbit through the night,

Eccentric and reverse. My four strange moons,
My sole companions on my frigid course,
Attend my steps with constant servitude.
Within my realms exists no blaze of day:
A pale dim twilight and the blackest night
Share my dull time a'twixt them, and unmarked,
Blend one into the other in a chain
Of black and grey strung to infinity.
My sluggish seasons, with a dawdling gait,
Through long elapse of time complete their course,
Cold and benumbed; no summer growth of green
O'er my dark globe its cloak of gladness sheds.
Yet have I served a purpose in my time:
My perturbations gave a planet life,
And from my movements sprang a brother star
The last oasis in old Sol's domain.

System Spirit.

'Tis true indeed; though at that time thyself
Wast deemed the limit of my universe,
—The utmost bound that any eye could see
Within the realms that own Sol's sovereignty.—
Rise thou the fairest of my children all,
Thou life-decked Earth! Nature's conservat'ry!

[*Spirit of Earth rises.*

Thrice happy orb, blessed in a temperate clime,
Clad in the verdure born of genial warmth,
—Where fiery vapours and a sunless day
Are banished from the ever fruitful land,—
Speak thou the wonders that have passed since I
Left these bright regions for the worlds of space!

Spirit of Earth.

Most mighty Lord, when last I heard thy voice,
'Twas shortly since thou bidd'st a form appear
Which now is known as MAN. Thou bidd'st him come,
—An that thou bear'st remembrance of the same,—
And blessed, or cursed him,—either way thou wilt—
With what belongs to Spirits,—even MIND.—
Thou gav'st him that would lead him dominant
O'er all my simpler forms, and yet thou gav'st
A tempering conscience;—such that should have made
Him gentle, merciful, and kind to all.—
Since then, Alas! What passeth? Soon he finds
Himself more powerful than all other life,
And, for the want of something to subdue,

Enslaves his fellows, and with hideous war
Defiles my peaceful glades. As thou did'st will,
His knowledge grows with time, but with that growth
His means of murder, till he even makes
The animals his poor accessories,
And not content, must bend great Science herself
To wreak him on his self-made enemies.
'Tis true his knowledge hath attained a pass
None could have dreamed on from his feeble sphere,
And from crude data he hath fixed some laws
That dominate all form material.
That little done seems vast to him indeed,
Who thus conceives the doer vaster still,
—From Insignificance to Arrogance
There's but a step between.—Take back thy gift!
To things of matter formed, 'tis not a boon!
They cannot have that calm serenity,
Indifference to the future, and to fate,
That makes the hero and ourselves regard
The fruits of knowledge, calm, unmovedly.
To such 'tis but a worry, and a source
Of evils many, both to them, and those
Midst whom their lot is cast. Oh! pity those
On whom revengeful man when mind has shown

Existence is not happiness; but that
If analysed, dissected, and resolved,
It proves a state where pleasure *may* exist,
But pain and sorrow reign perpetually;—
—Oh! pity those on whom he works his will;
Some slaved in prisons, others killed outright,
That he may find that thing which Mind denies,
And yet proclaims the aim of all on earth,
—Real happiness!—Which but to grasp how hard,
And having grasped to hold!—Since thou wast here
I have seen nations rise, and marked their growth;
How slow their progress, by what virtue stern
Up-propped, till when grown ripe to mellowness,
In its own power the swollen mass corrupts;
—'Tis then grows that sweet fungus Luxury,
Which saps the vigour of the frame and mind;—
Then ruin headlong falls; and Discontent
And Anarchy disrupt the festering whole.
'Tis with the man as with the nation, none
Can rise from littleness and yet retain
The virtues that advanced prosperity:
—Some taint, though small, all greatness must contract:—
Those that rise slowest, these the slowest fall,

While those who meteor-like rush through the world
To zenith height, like meteors descend. . .
Is this a form to last, that cannot rise
Without the natural sequence of decay?
Say not, thou wilt preserve him.

System Spirit.

Nor will I.
But through long lapse of time his brain shall thwart
His body's just desires. Yea, he shall think
But of his mind alone;—deem all things wrong
That tend not to advancement of his brain,—
Till overwork, and worry, and neglect,
Perform their offices.

Spirit of Earth.

It is most well
And of most simple compass, he himself
Will further it in all things that he can.

System Spirit.

Venus arise! Thou beauteous star of eve
(For now few know thee as dawn's diadem)
Advance thy brilliant form!

[*Spirit of Venus rises.*

Thou radiant gem!
The fairest shape that lights the dusky hour
'Neath Luna's sovereignty. Thou glorious orb!
In beauty rightly fitted to thy name,
Would we might see thee when thou nearest art,
Since that but half doth show such loveliness!
Speak! What has passed with thee since last we met?

Spirit of Venus.

Most mighty Spirit, bright elysian years
Of happy sunshine have in sequence passed
Since last thou bad'st me to a conference.
Of glowing summer, all my orb partakes;
My poles, no law of ice and snow condemns
To frozen bleakness everlastingly;
Each part in turn to the bright sun succeeds
And thaws its coldness in his generous breath.
Oh, did a dreamer lend his thoughts to me,
What airy structures might not he erect!
—What tinsel fabrics wove with gossamer!—
—Of dazzling beauty, light, and delicate,
Which floating joyous on a sea of thought,
Sail full in sight, and clouding, fade away

To the dull realms of all forgetfulness.—
What dreams of bliss would fill my sunny skies!
What pure born thoughts of perfect happiness!
—A sphere where goodness revels in delight
And basks in rays of heavenly purity.—
—Yet how unlike to this reality!—
—A thin clad sphere with axis slanting low,
Such that a winter and a summer must
Alternate reign with fierce severity;
No frigid Pole, no hot Equator there;
Their regions mix, and each in turn partakes
The other's attributes; yet oftener far,
The fiery poles outvie th' equator's heat
And clothed in white the last in winter lies.—
What mighty seasons govern all my sphere!
What hardiness all life must there possess,
In one short year to feel with biting force
A tropic summer and the arctic snows!

System Spirit.

Thou ruby Mars! Thou whose dark orbit runs
Hard by the confines of a gem lit sea,
—A happy sun-born archipelago,—

Whose brilliant islets flash their moving sparks
Through the dull depths of night: appear and speak!

[*Spirit of Mars rises.*

What news has thou within thy ruddy realms?

Spirit of Mars.

Most gracious chief; as it befits my name
As god of warriors and the star of war,
I have made captives, and now through my sky,
Deimos and Phobos,—two encircling moons,—
Rush shining night and day. One slowly moves
In onward progress, stately and obscure;
While Phobos, brighter, larger, and more near,
Seems to shoot backward through the orbs of space
In rapid motion, strange and opposite.
My body now is forming to the heat,
And islands, seas, and continents bespeak
The gradual road to life. My poles of snow,
Where heaped in ice my axle lies congealed,
In time will melt; and then with free'r gait,
More nearly situate to where earth doth roll
Her temperate course amid the starry skies,
My quicken'd body, teeming o'er with life,

Will throb responsive to the warmer glow.
'Tis with us planets as with every life
From matter sprung,—some particles unite,
And when conjoined, the whole conglomerate
Exists as one; which at its greatest then,
After a time from some disrupting cause,
Tends to break up; and is resolved once more
Into its elements, which 'chance again
May help make up a second like the first.
This is the course of matter. I am now
About the middle of the middle stage:
My youth is o'er, and manhood just begun:
In the far future threats eventual death,
When I, in turn, by stubborn Fate compelled,
Amidst the blaze must throw myself, and die
Upon the torrid bosom of the Sun.

System Spirit.

It is most true; and I, although to me
Belongs a kingdom greater far than thine,
—E'en I, must in the labyrinth of time,
See my possessions fade, till lost to sight,
They change their form in darkness, and so quit

Their present semblance.—All is change around.
The Past we know not: what the Future brings
We can but guess: and e'en the Present Time,
—So full of change,—we may not read aright.
What 'tis we see, is but a span of time
Which lengthens out unending either way;
—A moment's glimpse at some long, strange, procession,
Which, in its movement changes every hour
As some kaleidoscope.—From such to judge!
Things are.—The why we know not; nor can tell.
That must content us, we can see no more.
Mercurial Spirit! Thou who guid'st the path
Of the bright 'Glitterer' so seldom seen,
Arise! [*Spirit of Mercury rises.*
What things have passed within thy ken
My smallest Planet? Thou whose brilliant orb
Shoots like an arrow through the burning sky!

Spirit of Mercury.

Benignant Spirit, gracious in thy might!
My molten course amid the solar fumes
I rush at headlong speed, and ever on

Through fire-born gases cleave my rapid way,
And like a Phœnix, vanish in the flames
But to arise anew. My time is near:
Some day a cloak of fire old Sol will fling;
When my poor sphere, enveloped in its folds,
Indrawn by the fierce rush, will blaze and die.
Betwixt the Sun and me, with faster pace
Than e'en my rapid own, rush phantom orbs,
With fickle light,—uncertain and unknown;—
Which midst the radiance shine and disappear,
Erratic and disturbed. Since last thou cam'st,
I from my path have watched the boiling sun,
And seen the mighty workings of his face
From day to day;—no moment ever still;—
A ceaseless turmoil rages o'er the whole.
Anon perchance, one time some spot appears
As if quiescent;—but the next it heaves,
And from its bosom burst huge sheets of flame,
Shot out prodigious in a whirl of fire
Midst the blue space beyond.—A mighty sight!
That awes the looker with such thoughts sublime
Of giant forces struggling to be free,
Yet held in thraldom by one mightier still,
That he might think that he now looks upon

A remnant of old Chaos. Such it seems,
Yet this is the great centre of our space,
—The source of order and the throne of life!—

System Spirit.

Assembled Spirits! Ye around me here,
Companions of my labours and my toils!
Ye who through ages o'er my realms have swayed
Your various sceptres in united zeal
For the fair cause of order! List to me!
I have a tale of sorrow for your ears
—A tale of ruin, havoc, and despair,—
Will raise your hearts in anger! 'Tis for this
I bade ye here; that solemn council might
Its reasons clear, and voice united bring,
To thwart th' aggressor. See yon yellow star,
Low on the west beneath the Greater Bear!
Does it look dangerous? The puny size
Doth mask the covert ill; both grow with time.
An epoch on, and half the western sky
Will fill with light of strange refulgence born!
Then o'er thy worlds will creep a sense of dread,
As high in air the warning radiance shines,

Lovely but threat'ning, and though distant far,
Yet coming ever nigh. Oh, I can see,
As though it happens, all the wreck around!
—It comes!—Swift through the distant sky,
Near, and yet nearer, glows the fiery orb.
Avaunt thou fiend!—'Tis useless.—On, still on;
Through the still ether of a red hot sky
Fast roars the hissing mass! Thou second sun!
Yet as unlike the first as Death to Life!
Thou monster mass of raging moltenness,
Begot by Ruin of the Fire of Hell,
Stop thou e'en now!—Alas!—Yet nearer still;
Till the whole surface of the earthly globe
Assumes a spitting heat! and the pale Sun
Amid the burning sky looks darkly out;
—A blacken'd spot amidst a world of flames!—
Yet closer! Till the giant furnace sphere
Usurps full half the heavens!—Closer still!—
Till the old Sun starts from his resting place
With quick'ning speed, and fast, and faster still,
Courses the sky towards the threatened death!
—He breaks!—He splits!—Two minor suns appear.
'Tis but a moment; and again they split!
—A second more, they burst!—and pouring on,

While the dread terror still pursues its way,
Stream on its bosom in a rain of fire,
—A molten torrent, weird, tempestuous!—
Then too my planets leave their orbits calm,
Borne by the whirlwind with resistless force,
All rush at once, and like a rocket's stars,
Burning descend in one long dying stream.
Oh, what an ending to my reign of peace!
My kingdom blasted by a raging sun,
—All prematurely.—All my pleasant dreams
Of happy future, bright, and orderly,
Shattered to dust. My well tried scheme,
Its mechanism, form, material,
Its well-planned parts, and cunning workmanship,
All swept to ruin in one crashing blow!
And shall this be? Wer't better not to wait
Till the great cataclysm of The End,
When ruined Nature smokes across the sky
In lurid streaks of fire, and tranquil Space,
Plunged in the blackness of the Night of Death,
In all its vastness, serves so dark, and dead,
But as Oblivion's dreary charnel-house;
—The grave of worlds,—the sepulchre of suns?—
What would ye? Speak! Shall I petition Him

Who rules all space, supreme afar and near
O'er all things; or must I
Even await the coming of the shock?

Spirit of the Sun.

Is this then all? Is this our last refuge?
Our one alternative? Can we not hope
That something may, in course of ages on
Arrest that wild career? Thou speak'st as't were
A solemn certainty. Thou can'st not say
There is no hope.

System Spirit.

'Tis true; but what is Hope?
Hope is the fraud that Longing doth impose
Upon our better reason. Thus it is
In dire extremity, when chance is least,
Hope's mirage shines the stronger. We all know
The pleasant glamour that our mind doth weave
O'er all our past events, which when they 'fell
Yielded not half the pleasure that they give
As viewed in retrospect. So 'tis with Hope;

That o'er the Present pleasingly doth cast
Its gilded film of phantasy, to make
Existent things seem better than they are.
No wisdom lies in Hope;—a vain deceit
Practised on self by self.—No, it behoves
Us to make choice of measures and to act.
I wait your counsels.

Spirit of Neptune.

Brother Spirits, I,
Though I know not your several ways of thought,
Would like to hazard my opinions forth
In naked strength before ye. Are things such
Ye would retain them as they now exist
To all eternity? Bethink ye now:
Are things so pleasant with each one, that he
Could not conceive them better? For myself,
I wish a change. In one dull tedious round,
Unlit by light, to drag oneself along,
Is not a high ambition; and ye all
Must in some detail be not quite content;
If of itself, the sheer monotony
Of endless motion in an orbit fixed,
Would not alone suffice. What more would ye?

Here is a chance will free ye for all time:
No longer bound by laws material,
Loosed from all bondage, ye may wing your ways
Amidst the worlds around, untrammelled, free.
What if it comes?—Comes there not with it change?—
Excitement stern will fill each dubious sphere,
And with the heat each pulse will livelier throb,
While eager interest every mind absorbs
To turn th' occasion for its good or ill.
Then comes a time when each may seize a place
More suited to his wish, or failing lose
That which he would retain. It might befall
Our sun would act the planet, and involved
With mightier forces, pass unhurt away,
With the great Wonder to strange worlds afar.
Oh, what a voyage of wild discovery!
Dang'rous may be,—as all new travels are,—
But what a field of vision would unfold,
—Unknown, unguessed at, strange and wonderful!—
Brethren, what will ye? Will ye take the chance,
And run the hazard of a glorious change,
—(And all thy spheres must perish soon or late)—
Or will ye still in stagnant lethargy
Move with dull sameness in a beaten path?

Spirit of Mercury.

A change! Lets risk the chance! What can we lose?
Either the end comes soon and suddenly,
Or wrung with waiting, we perceive the blow
For ever threatening, as in doubt to fall,
Yet ever held on high. Let it be sharp!
More sudden then the better. Choose the one
That ends one way the quickest: e'en though that
May chance to fall against ye. Far the worst
Is dread suspense, which like a cankered sore
Envenoms happiness.

Spirit of Jupiter.

Here no suspense.
If should our prayer succeed, all things will run
The even tenour of their way unchanged,
Though that great Menace will no longer threat
With fiery rays our very life itself,
But if, alas! Some reason too profound,
—Too deep for us to fathom,—should outweigh
Our slight petition; then ye have your will;
Destruction's horrors and a world of death

With violent ruin will envelope ye!
Oh, brother Spirits, it may suit the case
Of Neptune, plunged in dark oblivion,
Who must for age on age eternal wait
To reach the happy zone; or Mercury,
Who, all his life run by, would snatch at aught
That might release him from approaching fate;
But for ourselves who now enjoy that state,
—The summit of a sphere's expectancy,—
Or who contented, in near distance see
Our happy turn approach; why,—why should we
Desire the state convulsed?—A doubtful gain
Against a certain loss.—It cannot be
For mere excitement ye would risk such odds,
And though destroyed, draw pleasure from the deed,
As would the men of earth, where in this age
To gain that end all else is sacrificed.
Say with me Brethren; shall we rather not
United pray our gracious Spirit Chief
That he petition to the Lord of All,
—King o'er the chieftains of the Universe—
To check ARCTURUS in his wild career,
And fix his orbit everlastingly?
Speak my friends! Are ye for change or order?

Spirit of Uranus.

Both!

But since, alas! the one, will needs destroy
All semblance of the other; then must I,
Although unwilling, still cast in my lot
With my great neighbour Jupiter.

Other Spirits.

And we.

Therefore we pray Thee, as our System's Lord,
To represent us at the mighty throne
Of the great King of Destiny; and there
To tell our woes and dangers. Not as yet,
Has that new growth Misanthropy had power
To change our love of life.

Spirit of the System.

Yet is it true
It is the last advancement of the brain.
The lowest life scarce cares if danger threats,
The next advanced shrinks backwards at its touch,
While that more progressed flies the slightest sign.

The brains formed higher still, observe the blow,
And with invention thwart it; but these last,
—Highest though strange,—perceive where it must fall,
Yet thinking on the utter hollowness,
And empty mockery, of things around,
Unmoved await the end. Yet am I pleased
At this your wise decision, and will bear,
With eager flight your just petition up
Unto the Head of All; and there will show
Him why ye plead, and why ye would conjure,
Of all things else, a speedy settlement.

PESSIMISTIC LIFE.

'Tis Curiosity and Fear
—Two things alone,—that keep us here!

Plunged in the turmoil and strife,
Unasked, we awake and are here;
Sent to hard labour for life,
Foredoomed to the shroud and the bier.

Born to the mercy of Fate,
Dependent on others we live;
Thrown as a burdensome weight
Where pleasure alone we should give.

Brought, where too many are now,
To mix with the toilers around,
Slaving with hand, and with brow,
To seek for the pleasure unfound.

Reared on the bodies of those
Who perish that we may be fed,
While ever behind us grows
The skeleton train of the dead.

Brought here to plunder and rob
Our fellows too crowded before;
To add to the struggling mob,
And pilfer its hard-gotten store.

Sentenced to worry our brain,
Till, urged to the depths of despair,
Wrung for a life-time in vain,
The Future looms lurid and bare.

Tortured and plagued by our mind
Lest shortly all happiness cease,
Stirred by a fore-thought unkind,
A stranger to comfort and peace.

Oh, to be free from the thrall
Of Futurity's shadow so dark,—
To rise from the deadening pall
As blithesome and gay as the lark!—

Happy the Bedlamite's cell,
Where reason can never perplex;—
Happier the being whose knell
His soul to its haven directs!—

Dying at last, at our death,
Snap friendships and love at a blow;—
Tortured and racked our last breath
By doubts as to where we may go.—

—Whether a bliss of delights
Awaits us, or torment in Hell,
Or utter extinction blights
The soul with a lasting spell!—

A SUSSEX DOWN IN SUMMER.

Softly comes the balmy zephyr
O'er the blue sea's rippling face,
Wafting sweet and wafting ever
Purest air with gentlest grace.

Shines the noonday sun down brightly,
Cloudless smiles the hazy sky,
O'er the cornfields rustling lightly,
As on Beacon Hill I lie.

High in air the soaring swallow
Gnat-like swims his mazy way,
And from out the azure hollow
Floats the sky-lark's fainting lay.

All around the insects murmur,
And the distant sheep-bell's sound
Serves to root my thoughts the firmer
In the beauties all around.

All the turf beside me lying,
Crushed beneath my cumbrous weight,
Teems with bustling creatures hieing
Hither, thither, small and great.

Watch the tiny beetle climbing
In and out with hurried speed,
And the ant on stem declining,
Tottering with its captured seed.

Everywhere all Life rejoices,
Rev'lling in the pleasant glow,
And bright Nature's hundred voices
Hum their thanks in heav'nward flow.

EARTH'S HISTORY.

—An all-pervading mist;—gigantic ball,
Vap'rous and fiery;—drawn from out the depths
Where even yet attenuated spread
Its further confines;—slowly cooling mass,—
Which, as its particles together drawn
Unequally,—more closely where most cool,—
Slowly revolves; and growing more compact,
Shrinks as a whole; but still within itself,
With varied density, some parts contract,
—Leaving void spaces in its mammoth mass,—
And, as more dense they grow, each from the rest
With tenfold speed retracts, and gathering close
Its thick'ning clouds, revolves a liquid sphere. . .
What now appears? Unnumbered nuclei
—Liquid at centre; with their mother mist
Cohering close, but growing less compact
As farther stretching,—there rotate around
Their central points with ever changing axes.
Cooling anon, each separate new-born sphere,

Though but an unit midst those myriad worlds,
Exerts on all the others sev'rally,
And they on it, a strong attractive force;
All move; and by the motion changed, the force
Acts varyingly, some meet and coalesce;—
Others, revolving at too high a speed,
Grow more and more oblate, until at last
Split into two, each half relieved now rolls
Throbbing in concert round its fellow orb,
Linked thereunto by a strong chain unseen. . .
With equilibrium at length attained,
—But temporary and slow changing still,
For Nature's Law is Change—where motion is
And forces are, there ever Change must be,—
Masses of liquid fire, at distance huge,
Roll on their axes, and with varied pace
Move onward through a labyrinth of stars,
While in their wake, in front, and all around,
Rush circling smaller orbs;—some in their train
Bear bodies yet more small;—others, whose size
Their neighbouring sphere more nicely balances,
Turn one around the other, and the pair
With wavy circles circumscribe their sun. . .
Slowly they lose their heat;—unequally,—

The larger, and those in close proximity
To the huge central mass of molten fire,
With those whose uncondensèd envelopes
Remain the thickest,—these more slowly cool;
While those more distant, small, and naked orbs,
Quicker solidify. Our central Sun
Whose size the mind appalls, planet-like rolls
In giant orbit round Alcyone,
—Queen of the thickly clustered Pleiades,
Who lacks a brilliant from her star-lit crown;—
Whilst our poor Earth shows but a sorry moon
Dragged where it will by its superior fellow,
Trivial in size and insignificant. . .

Behold our solar system. The bright Sun
Centre of all; round him we molten move,
Revolving quicker, such that day and night
Measure not half their now duration;
But, as we turn, our form alters in shape,
Huge tides of our own body-matter swell,
And, as a thin crust cools, volcanoes burst;
A sea-sick undulation heaves each hour
Of the short day; the stifling atmosphere
Abounds with clouds,—but fire, not rain, descends.—
Dim shines the moon with a dull glowing red;

Not clear, and sharp in outline, such as now
Its every feature shows, but lurid, blurr'd,
—Like to the winter sun through London fog;—
Then always round, no pagan crescent then
Illumined up with pale and frigid rays
Earth's midnight hour;—an ever shining disc,
Some time more bright, or duller, and anon
Of parti-shaded hue, sheds its weird light
On ever present day.—There in the zenith height,
Which all ablaze with strange eruptions glows,
Bright Venus shines, nor Mars less brilliant casts
His ruddy rays, both in the burning sky
Like dwarfish suns their bright caloric shed.
Great Saturn, yet unborn, but as a cloud,
Or hazy phosphorescent nebula,
Exists in embryo; orb, moons, and ring
Blended unformed in one pale lifeless mist.
Gigantic Jupiter rolls his wide way,
Molten, and massive, but eclipsed in light
By a huge planet, brighter, and more near,
Which 'twixt himself and Mars rotating fast,
To the great sun perpetual homage pays.
—But where now seen?—Where is that glorious form?
—A second, smaller, but a brighter Moon?—

There in its place innumerable rush
Thousands of smaller worldlets; one and all
Move on eccentric in a cloud around
The ancient orbit, varying in size
From our own Moon to a few miles across.
What fierce explosion, what catastrophe,
What direful tumult, rent this blazing sphere?
—Blasted to dust!—Incomprehensible!
The hugeness of the action over-powers
Our feeble minds, palsied and paralysed
By the sublimity and awful grandeur
Of such a dire disruption. Hell itself
Might find its frightful terrors here excelled.
—Disastrous portent!—Fell calamity!—
Will everlasting ruin seize on each,
And hurl in black disorder sun and moon,
Planets and stars, earth, comets, meteors, all,
Back to the chaos of Oblivion? . . .
Cooler earth grows:—heat radiates into space;—
Her face solidifies, and solid rock
First forms;—an outward shell, fissured and rent
By fierce internal forces. Presently
Liquids condense, lakes form and grow to seas,

Swelling to oceans at a boiling heat;
—The rocks dissolve,—and waters charged with salts
Percolate inwards, there more heated still,
Under great pressure, they more potent grow,
And as they cool, deposit in the clefts
Their various substances erstwhile dissolved. . .
Shortly;—but whence, or how, what man can say?—
LIFE first appeared;—but in what form unknown;—
Lowly, which for long ages toiled along
With scarce apparent change, unwritten yet
In Nature's stony tablets. First we find
Dim marks in slate; uncertain Eozöon;
But later on in those primeval seas
Strange Phyllopods, and Trilobites appear,
In rich profusion strewn; sea-weeds abound,
And corals multiply; whilst lowly plants,
Cryptogamous, make green the face of earth.
Tides rise and fall unheeded; sediments
Slowly deposit on the ocean bed,
Entombing in their midst the skeletons
Of such existence as hath lived its time.
Life how ephemeral! All earthly things
Live but to die. What waste of precious force!

In ages past what vital energy
Hath silent flitted by, and passed away
Unnoticed as it came! What myriads
Of lowly forms have one time dwelt on Earth!
Countless their skeletons that here remain,—
Themselves how countless then!—What wasteful death!
Behold the Chalk alone of Limestone rocks,
Stretching afar through all the Weald of Kent,
—Acres on acres;—then view Beachy Head,
That mammoth mass foraminiferal.
Gauge well that bulk of thick solidity!
Muse on the skeletons, complex, but small,
In life the outward shell,—brittle and thin,—
Of tiny animalculæ, which then,
Numberless buoyed in Ocean's midway depths,
Floated their dull existence; but at last
Waning, they yielded up their helpless life,
And as they died, dropped down, and littering
The old sea bottom in its stormless depths,
Piled up this vast white mass! Imagine that!
Then think on Time and Number! And that Time
Is scarce an epoch in Earth's History! . .
Gradual the seas with swarming fishes teem,

All armour-plated like to knights in war.
The pearly Nautilus, straightened and bent,
In every form and shape now sails his craft
Upon the sea of life, and trims it so
It buffets every gale, and lasts till now.
Oh, best of sailors, who can tack his ship
With ev'ry shifting breeze;—avoid the rocks
And whirlpools that beset the rigid course;—
And bring his skiff, unharmed, and safe through all,
To the last haven of eternity!
Yield then to others the poor empty praise
Of sailing Ocean's breast 'neath sunny skies;
—A fragile bark upon a mortal sea,
Whose treach'rous surface, while it bears thee up
One moment, with a calm and oily look,
Prepares the next, with dark and angry brow,
T'engulph and overwhelm thee.—Ammonite,
—Thy burly brother,—following thee close,
Quickly excels, fosters, and multiplies;
But grown at last unwary with success,
Forgets some tack, and though he casts about
In divers shape, and varies more, and more,
He languishes and dies. The track once missed
Is seldom found again. And woe to him,

Though e'en a giant in size, or numberless
As sand grains on the shore, that path once lost
Naught can avail, full soon he perisheth. . .
The land, clothed all in green, bears forests huge
On its forsaken shores; there tall tree ferns,
Horsetails and Lycopods, together mixed
In rich profusion grow; untouched by Man:
Those virgin solitudes, matted, and dense,
No cheering birds enliven; there the trees
Live on, and die; and as each falls, another
Grows up and flourishes; until in turn
Grown old and cankered, or by storms o'erthrown,
It perishes;—and so at last exist
Whole living forests grown on skeletons
Of former vegetation. There now live
Lepidodendrons in abundance wild,
Fern-like Caulopteris there sheds its fronds,
And Sigillaria thrives. Around, the earth
With leaves and fruit is strewn, a layer thick,
Matted and sodden by the winter rain,
Yearly increasing in its peaty depth. . .
Reptiles appear: the later forest-woods
Approach more nearly to the Conifers.
Those forests still, no mammal yet contain;

For ages long all uninhabited;
There no gay songster sings his cheering note;
—Devoid of pleasant shapes;—for there alone
Huge lizards rove, in aspect terrible,
Giant, and uncouth, with hind legs monstrous large.
Some round the shore plod wearily along
In the damp sand; others, more active far,
Take in the deep recesses of the wood
Their carnal pleasures. There, with sabre teeth
They tear and rend the e'en still quiv'ring flesh
Of their less powerful fellows. Insects now
Grace the dull air with life; and following fast,
That strange wing'd wonder, Pterodactyl, flies,
—Half bat, half reptile,—fit to climb a tree,
Strut o'er the land, or cleave the air with wings
Of skinny membrane from one finger hung,
And e'en to skim the sea, and from its breast
To snatch a scaly prey. Those seas around
Full many a Shark contain; and curious life
Reptilian there abounds:—huge saurian things,
With paddles, and great jaws armed with fierce teeth,
That prey on one another:—there is found
The long necked Plesiosaur, and his dire foe

Great Ichthyosaurus tyrant of the deep;
These Pliosaurus ousts, e'en huger still,
Large as the whale and toothed, a Plesiosaur
In all but the long neck. If any Age
Deserves a name, then call the Oolite,
The Lias, and the Weald, the Age of Fiends!
The various forms that roamed the face of Earth
In that dark period,—loathsome and uncouth,—
—More weird and terrible than any ghoul
Imagination compassed,—loosed in Hell
Would drive our Imps themselves to upper air,
Hurried, and scared, scarce daring look behind.
Iguanodon, herbiv'rous, lazy, huge,
Fierce Hylæosaurus with the crested back,
Megalosaurus, monarch of the woods,
Rove through the forests' dark solemnity.
Upon the sluggish river's oozy mouth,
Fest'ring in the mid-day sun, in slothful sleep
Poikilopleuron's elephantine bulk
Sinks deep into the mud: the neighb'ring pools
Harbour the Steneosaurus, there abound
Streptospondylus, Goniopholis,
Great reptiles fierce of crocodilian kind.
The broader channels Cetiosaurus haunts,

More suited to his size,—full sixty feet
From snout to tail;—his giant and sinewy legs
End in clawed feet, huge, webbed, and muscular:
Greedy, carnivorous, he ploughs the sea
At frightful speed upon his murd'rous quest.
Weird Pterodactyl flutters through the air,
Membraneous-wing'd, in scaly armour cased,
Beaked like the Adjutant, but armed with teeth;
—The strangest and uncanniest of all.—

With those strange reptiles, in that scene of strife
Small low class mammals, Marsupalia, live
Midst dread surroundings. Thus, a still, calm, peace
Dwells in the bosom of thrice horrid war,
Expands, and thrives through insignificance,
While mutual carnage thins th' oppressor's ranks
And lifts the burden from its downtrod cause.

Thus life reptilian swarms in every part,
Now at its height; from here their numbers thin,
—But why unknown,—unless indeed their food,
From ages of voracity and greed,
Had dwindled short, and then each on the other
Turned his fierce jaws: his weaker neighbours gone,
—The intermediates,—e'en the giant himself
—The smaller fry too trivial for his bulk,—

Must waste and die. Birds, reptiles' light offspring,
Now first are found, like to the Albatross
In form of bone: their footmarks long before
Dotted the ocean's strand with dubious print,
Whilst their weak skeletons, airy, and light,
Decayed away; less fitted to remain
Than even marks in sand,—that sand a shore.—

A pause now comes; no evidence appears
Of life existent in this changeful time.
The next remains,—forms likened more to those
Which now inhabit Earth,—bear traces plain
Of variation through long ages past,
—Long and continued.—Vast elapse of time
Of which no tell-tale evidence remains,
—A long-drawn blank of which each end is known;—
The space between analogy must fill.
Anon submerged, the varying face of Earth,
Now sea, now land, now lake, changes the look
Its every aspect bears; now torrid skies,
Parching, and hot, shine vertically down
And frail exotics flourish; and again,
Cold frigid snows congeal its every pore;
Clad all in ice, inhospitable shores

Girdle it round, no welcome plant there grows
To cheer the sight;—cold, tenantless, and dark,
A numb white desert spreads before the eyes.—
Gradual these changes grow, sluggish but sure.
Again, perchance, a pleasant warmth once more
Revives the dormant parts; Earth's energy
Another forest feeds, in character
Diff'ring but slightly from the elder one,
But other forms grow up, and old ones change
To meet the new conditions;—higher forms,
That better hold their own, live thriving on,
The best more num'rous grow, while those effete
And least adapted kinds, thin out and die.
Thus does all life on Earth each moment change,
Slowly, but surely, and the best survive.
Here various mammals live still thriving on,
The Birds increase, and small, but higher, fish
Usurp the sea's dominion; trees and plants
Approach to recent forms; and now are found
Reptiles less plentiful, the Saurian race
Fast dying out; the Crocodilians few
And much less common: on the other hand
Ophidia first appear; Turtles increase
In number and variety, and though small

The Lacertilia multiply. And now
The mammals spread in ever growing hordes
By sea and land; the bare skinned Pachyderms
Rise dominant o'er all,—the ruling race,—
Whilst other forms beneath their easy sway
Live on unchecked to breed and multiply.
Tapir-like forms abundantly are found,
Of varying size; oft like the modern hare,
Large eyed, and swift; some like the antelope,
Agile, and elegant, course o'er the land
And deck the woodland plain: others, more cumb'rous,
Doze in the marsh, and float the watery flood.
A giant tortoise toils its weary way,
—Megalochelys,—on whose dome-shaped back
Right well the Hindoo universe might rest.
The long toothed Dinothere,—to which the whale
And elephant doth each resemblance bear,—
Amphibious, now lives his hybrid life;
Quadrumana are found; and present forms,
Giraffe, Horse, Camel, Hippopotamus,
In decent plenty range; a giant Bear,
Felidæ, and Hyænas, prowl the woods,
Intent on murder: huge colossal Sloths
Ravish the forest of its fairest trees;

The lordly Mastodon stalks o'er the earth,
Serene in his huge strength, fearless of all,
Unharmful and unharmed: about this time
Still toiling Nature first produced a form,
In pedigree collat'ral with the Apes,
But more erect, intelligent, yet still
Brown-skinned, and hairy, with receding brow,
Deep sunken eyes, and thick-set powerful jaws,
—In aspect fierce, unpromising,—yet this
Through generations, gave the training hand
Of Nature, ever eager for the best,
Its present climax MAN.—Primeval Man,—
Who roamed the woods in which the Mammoth dwelt,
And with the Tiger, Bear, and skulking Wolf,
Kept up a doubtful warfare: not as now,
Lord of creation, whom all others fear;
But one of many, each and all of whom,
Prey on the other; while incessant strife,
With doubtful fortune wages all around.
So Man, in constant terror for his life,
But slow increasing, hardly holds his own.
Large Ruminants herd in the forest plains,
The Irish Elk wades through the peaty bog,
And large Carnivora prowl; enormous shells

Rest under shady trees;—the giant house
Of ancient Armadilloes.—Gradually
Such forms die out, Man thrives, and alters all;
No longer strength ensures preponderance,
Skill takes its place; the strong and fiercer beasts
Remorselessly are killed, the others live
But for the use of Man. A stage is reached
Diff'rent from all before.—For the first time,
Nature is pampered artificially. . .

Oh, what a retrospect of wasted life!
What various forms have one time swayed our world!
—For ever gone!—Deep buried in the Past,
Forgotten and unmourned! And can it be
It will continue to the Fatal End?
Will Man die out, and all his glorious works
Lie as still ghosts upon the face of Earth?
—Sad Monuments of mighty Greatness past,
O'er which the Moon will weep, with sorrow pale,—
—Deserted as the dead?—O, mournful thought!
E'en as I write, deep palling on the mind,
The shadow of dark Fate appears to come,
And with one breath, ourselves, our loves, and lives,
Fade into darkness, never more to rise
From the dead lumber of Oblivion!

THOUGHT.

Oh, what a blessing art thou,
Thou Thought that know'st no bounds,
That leav'st our toil girt sphere,
For the depths devoid of sounds!

Limitless, airy, and free,
Untrammelled by physical laws,
Thou peerest where no one may see,
For reasons that know not a cause!

Oh, what a weapon to grace
A body not yet in its prime,
As a second annihilates space
And a minute anticipates time!

Oh, how thrice blessed art thou,
By gravity unsubdued,
That turn'st the toil worn brow
From Life's eternal feud!

A blessing for ever art thou
To the richer of human kind,
As they think of the pleasures to come,
And the happiness left behind.

Yet how unfair thou art;
The rich, thou richer mak'st,
While, from the sorrowing heart
All happiness thou tak'st.

Friend of the struggling youth
As he enters on Life's first stage,
With visions of honour and truth,
And a peaceful and happy old age.

Foe of the full grown man,
As blighted, and thwarted, his life
Looks forth from a manhood of care,
To a dotage of hunger and strife.

Boon to the man whose success
Gives no fear what the morrow may bring,
—The object of Fortune's caress—
Where Virtue and Happiness cling.

Bane of the down-trodden slave,
Encompassed with sorrow and woe,
As he thinks of the hastening grave
And the pleasures he never may know.

But for the Philosopher's mind
Thy pleasures are choicest in store;
His course with bright gems thou hast lin'd,
—The Future holds promise of more.—

TO ARCTURUS.

Mass of rotundity,
Plunged in profundity,
Steeped in the blackness of heaven's abyss!
Back to thy solitude!
Back from the multitude!
Stop thy mad onslaught, thou monster amiss!

Blundering whitherward?
Thundering hitherward,
Molten, and massive, thou perilous star!
Wilt thou resistless,
Snatch us assistless,
Whirled to the regions of darkness afar?

Mountain of moltenness,
Fiery and oceanless,
Raving capriciously whither thou wilt,
Blasting, and blighting,
Thy path uninviting,
Art thou the destroyer that punisheth guilt?

A CLAIM.

What various changes hath our planet seen
Since its first birth midst Chaos' misty sheen!
—An orb of fire,—hot, glowing like a sun,
Yet cooling ever as its course is run,
—Till the cool waters settle on its face,
And blending rivers lend their silvery grace,
And watery jellies, protoplasmic, low,
Bathybius-like, in changing network grow,—
—Till higher forms the Plasson slime begets,
And varying slow, in cell-like structure sets.—
Then ages plunged 'neath Ocean's aqueous waste,
Progressive still, a Gastrula is traced;
—The Worms, the next,—while varying branches spring,
Till Vertebrates acknowledge MAN their King.
MAN, whom all Earth her sovereign ruler owns,
Who goads her workers, and who kills her drones;
Lord of all living things;—and all by him
Are sacrificed to meet his merest whim;—

He, Nature's last, most powerful, greatest,—best,—
—When not a tyrant o'er the feebler rest,—
E'en he must heed, if he break Nature's laws,
Vengeance befalls,—there is no saving clause.—
Nature, the just, all powerful, rigid, stern,
Controls the loftiest oak and lowliest fern,
No difference knows she 'twixt the high and low,
On each unerring falls the vengeful blow,
Nor can e'en Man himself, however strong,
If sinning, 'scape the certain judgment long.
Yet he, presumptuous, glorying in his brain,
(That but th' effect of Nature's varying strain)
Has dared to think himself above her sway,
And slight her rule as of a bygone day:
Thus does the headstrong offspring court his doom,
Yet wonders at the slowly settling gloom.
His numbers grown, increasing more and more,
And each year faster than the one before,
Naught can he see to check his onward spread,
A lack of food scarce enters in his head.
In olden times when wars and feud were rife,
The weak and ailing perished in the strife,
The rest, the strong,—stout, healthy people all,—
Throve all the better for the weaklings' fall;

Then, as a gardener tends his choicest plants,
Uproots the weeds, and lops the weaklier branch,
Till the fresh sprouts in rich profusion grow
And all the saps in livelier motion flow;—
Nature, of old, unfettered, trimmed her cares,
Nor suffered multiply unsuited pairs.
The likelier few who lived, then handed down
Their fitter virtues as a wealthy crown;
Posterity, enriched, pruned once again,
Still further purified the nobler strain:
Th' increase, though slow, with steps full certain moved,
And with the numbers, fitness too improved.
But now high Man, from meet oppression free'd
Grows rank and wild as any garden weed;
No longer Nature can the weak ones kill,
A marriage soon perpetuates their ill,
Their offspring, tainted with assured disease,
Must undermine society by degrees,
The good old stock, corrupted by the sore,
Is doomed to rot for breaking Nature's law. . .
When men 'neath guise of charity indeed,
Coddle the weakly, help diseased ones breed,
Spread wan Consumption sickening through the land

And to foul Cancer lend a helping hand,
Call them not friends!—Foes of the human race,
Who curry notice, and their gifts misplace.
Avails it aught to gain a paltry span
By pampering an ill, unfitted man?
For each short space of time that's gained to him,
The lives of animals, torn limb from limb,
Who might unless, have longer life enjoyed
To postpone death are uselessly employed;
The food used up for him, he keeps away
From those who need it, but who cannot pay,
—Healthy but poor,—than whom who better could
Receive a favour,—and the gift do good?—
Even the ancients tried to meet the case;
Cooped up within their city's cinctured space,
When they their people found too closely packed,
They'd have a war,—or if they neighbours lacked,
Infanticide they practised;—that was wrong,—
It thinned the people,—but it killed the *strong*.—
One would not wish such remedies as these,
But something's needful,—be it what you please.—
Can we not stop before more harm may chance,
—Permit of marriage but by Doctors' grants,
Forbid the banns to those unsound at least,

Nor then imagine reproduction ceased?—
Too fast the pace;—something must needs be done,—
A tax on children,—or all over one.—
If as it is the case be left to grow,
Great overcrowding all the world must show,
The used up earth their wants will not provide
When all their sewage goes beneath the tide,
And from the land each particle of good
Is swept beneath old Ocean's greedy flood.
Th' impov'rished soil, whence came the crop of corn,
Requires return of what has been withdrawn;
Yet what we cannot use, Digestion's waste,
We rather squander lest it be replaced.
The animals whate'er they eat return,
We may from them a useful lesson learn,
Their bodies when they die, they leave the soil,
Nothing is lost, to Nature's balance loyal.
This great transference of th' essential parts
Makes the poor soil defy the farmer's arts;
He cannot make each year good crops of corn
The self-same field successively adorn,
And naught replace; then how can the whole earth
Continuous give nor feel the growing dearth?
—Good for the ocean's bed and river's strand

When in the future they may rest dry land :—
Most generous foresight thus to aid prepare
These rich soiled gardens for the distant heir!
Methinks the education of the race
For themes like these might find a fitting place;
—Instruct the learnèd,—help their stronger minds
To grasp such stern necessities betimes.
How can it e'er our human progress aid
To teach street arabs Cæsar is decayed?
If but amongst them there a genius stray,
Be sure he will unaided make his way;
Lessons, to him, but cramp his lofty mind,
In the routine of hackney'd class confined:
Perchance, not good at conning facts by rote,
He sees fools pass him by the teacher's vote,
He notes their brains;—yet thinks his own are less,—
And soon discouraged, dons the dunce's dress.
Which is the better;—one dull average all,—
From which no sage can soar, or dullard fall,
With knowledge common, but with genius sparse,
Or minds like Darwin, Newton, and Laplace?
The rest, a herd;—may be can't add a sum,—
But they progress if genius be not numb.
What does this Education as now taught?

—With every evil the mad plan is fraught!—
Begot by Cant, Hypocrisy, and Puff,
As if without it ills were not enough!
Breeder of Plots, Dissatisfaction, Riot,
Anarchy, Murder, and all things unquiet;
—Would that the authors chance might reap the crop
Posterity in vain shall strive to stop!—
They teach a people whom they cannot feed,
Prepare a soil for Nihilism's seed,
Change country yokels into useless muffs
And honest peasants into idling roughs. . .
When each but knew his own, his father's lot,
And each for ages tilled the self same spot,
Quite satisfied, he envied others naught,
Contented with the peace his calling brought.
—Child of the plough, inured to honest toil,
Fond of his cottage and his native soil,
What care had he for base intrigue and gain,
Lord of his own fireside, and labouring wain!—
His humble cottage, with its crust and cheese,
His wife, and children clustering round his knees,
His evening pipe, his homely mug of beer,
His hearty laugh that did one good to hear,
His every action, told his simple worth,

An English Yeoman from his earliest birth. . .
And now! They drag him, while a ruddy boy,
To some close school away from his employ,
They teach him Singing, Drawing, Painting Maps,
Latin, Geography, or Greek perhaps,
Stuff which full thousand else beside him know,
And turn him out,—unfit to scare a crow.—
His money stopped, his time for earning gone,
His parents poorer, his own face more worn,
Less fed, more worried, if not overcrammed,
Proud, lazy, useless, and for ever damned. . .
While at the school his parents lose his wage,
The Farmer too must older hands engage,
A loss both ways; and if by chance he choose
—Small chance indeed,—his unskilled hands to use,
He finds himself,—his 'prentice time gone by—
No whit more able to mow grass, than fly.
Through his whole life he lives a bungling hand,
—Who learneth late will never understand.—
More often will he, with exalted sense
Of his poor powers, betake himself from thence,
Go to some town, and quickly undeceived
His flimsy castles ne'er will be achieved,
Turn loafer, drunkard, jail-bird,—what you will,—

He stays a tax upon the country still.
The towns increase, the country people thin,
Labour lies idle and engenders sin,
Crowding breeds vice, the taint with numbers grows,
Nor dies the plague-spot where it first arose. . .
Beware! Ye Rulers!—Ye have sown the seed,—
—The whirlwind comes,—while yet ye may, take heed!
The Commune's horrors France remembers well,
Two revolutions on her conscience dwell,
Europe aghast, numb-stricken, watched, and prayed,
—How ten-fold worse when Science lends her aid!—
When Vice triumphant, uses Virtue's tools,
And takes her weapons to subvert her rules!
This time, I prophecy, not *one;* but ALL,
Will freely answer Ruin's awful call,
EACH state will feel her throbbing bosom swell,
And our fair Earth will burst a smoky hell!
In that dire struggle, who can see the end?
—If *one* side conquer,—which the Lord forfend!—
Good-bye to order,—Man's poor race is run,—
An age's progress in a year undone. . .
Is this the end? Is there no other fate?
Haste then to check it, lest it be too late.

Arrest full soon the population's spread,
Distribute, to the poor and starving, bread ;
Pile up the taxes on the rich and strong,
Do anything ;—but Education's wrong. . .
And must this happen ? Is there then no chance,
And must we follow thrice unhappy France ?
Till now we've 'scaped ;—and why ?—In empty ground
Our colonies the safety valve have found.—
Are they a remedy ? When they are full,
Then will the Baker and the Devil pull.
In olden times, Religion did much good,
Man's benefactor was the priestly hood,
—Intoleration triumphed through the land,
And Inquisition clenched her bloody hand ;
In God's high name foul murderous deeds were done;
Fanatics perished with each rising sun :—
—It thinned the race ;—each side the other slew,
And Bigotry died wallowing 'twixt the two.
In India's clime, the Juggernaut held sway,
A safer, easier, and a simpler way ;
Most other nations held a grand battue,
And Kings their courtiers by the thousand slew ;
Fevers ran rampant through th' untutored crowd

Till Man for mercy cried his saints aloud,
And yet he flourished, multiplied, and spread,
Then what will hold him now those checks are dead?
He kills contagion, fosters public health,
Till even Death himself must come by stealth,
Though still Consumption's sickly banner waves,
And Cholera sweeps thousands to their graves;
Who stops these exits, gives mankind a curse,
—Disease is bad,—the antidote is worse. . .
Is there no chance:—and must all starve to death?
—Each curse the other with his parting breath?—
Or, by imperious hunger spurred to strife,
Turn cannibal, and take his neighbour's life?
YES! There is *one*!—A palliative 'tis true,—
But would it last long doubtful ages through,—
—Make food ye Chemists! And the one who can,
Bestows real blessings on his fellow-man;
For lack of space, though threatening's still afar,
But treasons batten where the hungry are.
With time thus gained, perchance some other cause
Will haply make our rapid increase pause:
—O'erworking babies, till they lose their wits,
Contract brain-fever, and then die in fits:—
—The use of drugs and foul tobacco's weed

Through generations may affect the breed,—
—Our women too, in men's positions placed,
Tortured by fashion, and too tightly laced,
Made to do head-work,—Oh, there's room for hope,
If Man's mad brain be but allowed fair scope!—

"What vile reflections!"—"Granted,—but they're true."—
"Why do you live?" "Nay that I might ask you.
"Certain it were, did not the human mind
"In human life a pleasing balance find,
"And, on the whole, the good the bad outvie,
"Not one *would* live, all would make haste to die.
"Life's end is happiness;—the object sole
"Of each one living is to reach that goal,—
"But when your pleasure gives another pain,
"The pleasure ceases, for your thoughts remain.
"As for myself, contented with my lot,
"I take my pleasure when most can be got,
"But, ~~as~~ since unasked, existence is my doom,
"Three things I claim:—Peace, Food, and Elbow-Room."

S. O. B. R.

And thou art dead. Gone is thy genial face;
Another lov'd one dropped from Life's hard race,
Which still continuous, with unending flow,
Changes each moment as its numbers grow.
Full in the course, fresh runners ever start,
Untired, fresh-winded, to the front they dart;
Anon fast wearying, others fresher still,
Pass them triumphant in superior skill,
While o'er the concourse, labouring for their breath,
Waves the dire aegis of capricious Death.
Now one the foremost, now the laggard poor,
Now the fresh-starter, now the veteran hoar,
The melancholy, gay, the young, and old,
The faint heart sluggard, and th' undaunted bold,
One, all, and each, promiscuous, feel his force,
Turned to dull clay full in their onward course. . .
Thus each unnoticed, blooms, and fades away,
The boy of yestermorn, a man to-day,
To-morrow gone,—remembered but by stone,—

Unmissed, unmourned,—and one more day,—unknown.—

Said I unmissed?—unmourned?—No, not of thee,

While still on Earth remains a thought of me!

When I am gone, then dark Oblivion's wave

O'er both shall roll in one eternal grave!

TO A COMET.

Hail to the visitor, Nature's inquisitor,
Messenger here from huge systems afar;
What untold mystery, lies in thy history?
Whither last cam'st thou, thou wandering star?

Emblem of emptiness, speed without impetus,
Gaseous thy nucleus, ponderless all;
Shining up yonder, a nomad and wanderer,
Till in some sun thou may'st happen to fall!

Shapen so curious, raging and furious,
Thou dost appear in the heavens on high,
Wisp so ethereal, hardly material,
Yet to appearances scourge of the sky!

Flimsy and nebulous, yet to the credulous,
Presage of evil, disaster, and woe;
Still all the evidence of thy foul pestilence
Rests on thy form in the heavens aglow.

During thy travelling, what tangled ravelling
Thou must have traced midst the heavens so vast
Round stars by the million, through miles by the billion,
For long countless ages forgotten and past!

Now thou art leaving us, slowly bereaving us
Here of thy weird supernatural mien,
Leaving us pondering whither thy wandering
Next will direct thee,—to what unknown scene.—

A REFLECTION.

Man here on earth exerts his feeble rule,
O'er things terrestrial undoubted king;
All live existence here obeys his will,
And he, with rod of iron,— fellest of tyrants—
Oppresses weak and strong;—mere playthings they,
Created for his pleasure or his use:—
—For naught beside;— no self existent life:—
Basest of slaves, interminably doomed
To live, toil, perish, at another's will,
Whose merest whim outweighs incomp'rable
Myriads of lives of Earth's inhabitants,
Unfortunates that chance to cross his scheme.
And how resist? No equal match for him
Who binds the shifty elements themselves,
Wields, forms, transmutes, and works them to his ends
By sowing strife betwixt them, using one
To aid him in o'ercoming its great fellow,
Which had without, his efforts laughed to scorn,

But now in turn amenable, doth act
To help disrupt a third; until at last,
By perseverance won, they yield themselves
A rich and boundless, everlasting prey.
Thus Man, reigning supreme all unopposed
O'er this small Earth, doth get to think himself
Master of all; and each existent thing
Made for his benefit and his alone;
—The cherished pet of the most high Creator,—
Who made and set him in this world of ours,
—One in a myriad,— insignificant,—
—Satellite of a satellite,— and this last
Perchance revolving satellite again
Round some great body, unknown, unperceived,
Plunged in th' abyssmal depths of further space,
In size gigantic, inconceivable,
Which e'en itself around Infinity
Makes revolution slow. Yet this small Earth,
Man's own dominion, in importance vast
To him, doth lose its insignificance,
Which when o'erlooked,— all else so distant far—
Doth make it seem Heart of the Universe
And in vast size immeasurably surpass
All other orbs, which but as twinkling points

Appear; while sea and land, stretching afar
In Nature's majesty where'er we go,
Seem limitless because unquittable. . .
Thus do we hold ourselves removèd far,
High o'er all other Earth's inhabitants,
When in reality, 'tis but our size
And utter trivial insignificance,
Doth make us mark a difference at all.
As some poor Rotifer, or Diatom,
Which to our eyes doth seem but as a speck,
Shapeless, and indistinguishably small;
Yet to its fellow it appeareth great,
And to yet smaller microscopic life
E'en as a giant immense, whose uncouth look
Doth augur goodly distance should be kept;
While us unknown, unguessed at, and unseen,
Quite inconceivable, would seem a god,
If our existence were but dream't upon. . .
Yet less than any Diatom on Earth,
We and our globe count in the Universe;
Less, and far less, yet like the Diatom,
Seeing ourselves with our own human eyes
And reasoning as things appear to us,
We hold ourselves the key-wheel of the whole,

On whose existence all things else do turn.
One amidst myriads, why should this poor Earth
Alone know Life, while foul Sterility
Places on all the rest her solemn bann?
E'en as the difference 'twixt two Protoplasms,
—Which, to our eyes, appear but as a mass
Of inert jelly, smooth, and featureless,
That but the merest touch might shiver up
Into a thousand fragile particles;—
So would the different forms of Earth, compared
One with the other, on an equal scale,
With the great wonders of high heaven's vault,
Which, to our poor, and earthly cultured minds,
Appear so vast, quite inconceivable,
Save as dim shadows looming through the mist
Of dark Infinity; which but to think upon
Doth crush the thinker with his littleness.
Oh, to imagine then th' Omnipotent!
Excelling more all cosmic wonders vast
By a more infinite Infinity!
Such that all distance and all size must be
Annihilated to their uttermost;
And smaller than a grain of sand to us
Must range that limitless profundity

Of stellar space with Earth engulphed therein.
Man, blind, and in his self importance wrapped,
Imagineth *his* world where *he* doth dwell,
Made, cast, and fashioned, by th' immortal hand
Of God alone; who, by the work o'ercome
Of making *him* and *his* accessories,
Required to rest Himself fatigued and tired.
Could we insult Him there an insult lay.
'His image, of His own Eternal Form
A faithful copy, wrought by His own Hand;'
So says the copy and no doubt doth know:
And if He stooped, immeasurably vast,
To fashion out that self-sufficient shape,
That shape of course, when made, took cognizance
Of every form and feature of the Presence,
Which on the instant it compared its own.
And too the wonders of the Earth alone,
With Man and his inferior congeners,
Took more, and far more, time for Him to make,
Than all th' immensities celestial!
Imagine then the One Omnipotent
Carving commandments in a book of stone,
When, but the slightest wish Ethereal
Had rooted them, indelibly infix'd,

Deep in the bosom of the human race.
Again, consider: at the World's creation,
The Universe, Earth, Man, and lower life,
Were formed contemporaneously within
The 'stricted limits of a day or so:
The blasted moon not elder to the orb
Which with a belt of fire is circled round,
—The ringèd wonder Saturn.—Not the less,
No Trilobite of pre-Devonian age
Out ages Man, all, all were born at once.
But while all other life has altered quite,
And the long change has left its traces plain
In the vast womb of its great mother, Earth,
Man, Man alone, unchanged, unchangeable,
Superior to such fate, lives on, and on,
Nor leaves his sacred bones as witnesses
Of his existence in dark ages past. . .
Each morn and eve, most men, with grateful heart,
Return their thanks for dangers safely past.
This, though quite needless, still can do no harm
If strict confined to simple gratitude;
But when, from thanks for favours just received,
The 'prayer' includes a hope for more to come,

Till finally the gratitude is dropped
And brazenly man asks his every wish,
Which should th' Omniscience will it, he would have;
And if unwilling, all the snivellings
Of such a 'microcosm' would unheeded pass;—
—Piously impious—then th' impiety
Doth clear reveal itself beneath the show
Of a thin garb of outward reverence!
Presumptuous Man! To think that he can prompt
Th' Omnipotent Creator! Yet 'tis strange
That such things being, they must needs be willed;
Omnipotence would guide the tool it made.
Then in the army prayer, wherein His aid,
—He who they say has made all men alike,—
Is invocated that one sect of them
May slaughter, maim, and kill, another race,
And carrying devastation in their wake,
Lay waste the country round. The peaceful homes,
The products of long years of arduous toil,
In one fell day are harried and destroyed,
And mournful desolation seizes on
The blasted face of a once fruitful land.
To aid in *this* they shamelessly invoke
Th' all powerful help of their great All-Creator.

Also the prayer for rain, where man presumes,
Either, to say a thing is needful now,
Whether Omniscience thinks so, or not;
Or else, to jog th' Eternal Memory
That such a thing has been too long forgot.
Blasphemy? Nay. Aught worth for good or ill
Lies in the deed and not the tale thereof.

And must we still such relics of the Past,
Transmitted down for years by word of mouth,
Hold up to reverence and high esteem?
Such fables have obtained in many lands,
In various forms, by various peoples sung
For ages down; when Man, incompetent
To battle with wild Nature's stormy power,
—Insufferably weak,—blown by the winds
And worsted by the raging elements,—
Would offer up some even feebler thing,
Or e'en a weakling of his own slight race,
A sacrifice, that he himself might be
Unharmed; and that the angry elements
Propitiated, might cease their direful wrath.
But as the chain of Time more lengthening grew,
And Man, from long immunity, but found
His fears increased the threatened ill ten-fold,

And growing more accustomed to such sights
As heaving earthquakes, meteors, and the like;
He saw, and understood, th' observed effects,
And turned his worshipping to what unseen,
Uncomprehended, uncontrollable,
Had caused these sudden outbursts. In this way
First grew Polytheism, which ripening,
Became Theogony, which last induced
Polycracy. But there confused they stopped.
Then a much subtler sect, with foresight great,
Went at a bound to the unknowable;
But not enough advanced, did sully it
With ancient stories, barbarously strange,
Which, like to snowballs, gathering in their course,
Got more, and more, and stranger, and more strange.
But now at last, well pruned, and trimmed again,
As education keeps its onward pace,
To suit the times:—how modified from when
They first arose! Till those called Christians now
Would have as pagan infidels been burnt
By those stern fathers of the creed's first birth.
But though discarding now the most unlikely,
And most weirdly strange, of those queer stories,
Yet we, but slow advancing, keep withal

The groundwork of the structure all intact,
With those embellishments which later art,
To bolster up the whole, may now insert:
Strangely conservative, who thus prefer
To prop, and patch, a creed decayed by time,
Which weakeneth year by year, than to erect
A newer and more strong Theology,
Aided by all the facts of modern science,
Built on a basis that may last for years;
Till our descendants, with extended powers,
O'erthrow e'en that again, to substitute
A creed still more accordant with known facts,
—If creeds but then remain necessities.—
Surely 'tis time that dogmas such as this,
Where man regards the Universal Power
But as himself a million magnified,
—And barely that,—should now for ever cease.
All punishment designed for Man alone,—
Corporeal, e'en though death has supervened,—
And future bliss,—wherein imagination
Plays the chief part on a contracted base,—
Where self-sufficient Man, round his Creator,
—All else excluded,—basks and suns himself
In the bright power of the Ethereal Presence!—

Assuredly now that Man knoweth more,
He cannot deem himself,— mite that he is,
Who if to-morrow blotted out creation
With his small planet,— all the world to him,—
All else quite unaffected would roll on
In its accustomed way;— he cannot think
Himself e'en now, in verity, *the one*
For whom all else was thus expressly made!

LINES WRITTEN BEFORE THE FALL OF KHARTOUM.

Abandoned!—Oh what wealth of sense,
Anguish of mind, and pain intense,
In that one word is wrapped:
Left to the cruel dictates of Fate,
Bemoaning trust misplaced, too late,
Inveigled and entrapped!

Abandoned!—In a desert land,
Surrounded by a hostile band,
Fanatical, and wild;
Shall Egypt's vultures, foul, and grim,
Gorgers of carrion, feast on him,
Our most chivalrous child?

The Bayard of our modern race,
But Bayards now seem out of place,
—Too high above the rest;—
To help in country's need he went,
—To martyrdom and long repent—
That country leaves its best!

Attended in his eager haste
Through parching sand and arid waste,
By one brave man alone;
Too trusting,—by a gauge too high
Judging another's honour.—Why?—
—His standard was his own.—

And when he went, men held their breath,
He went, 'twas thought, to certain death
—Almost foolhardy brave;—
But when 'twas known that safe he passed
Through Khartoum's gate unharmed at last,
A welcome sigh men gave.

Lured and enticed by promise fair,
To clear our honour he went there,
—Glad that the deed might be;—
Then doubly sullied, more, and more,
A darker stain than e'er before,
'Twill show till he be free.

The valiant chief who warriors led
Through China's insurrection red,
—The bravest of the brave;—

Now cooped within a prison wall,
Betrayed by some, mistrusting all,
May find a desert grave.

Fettered from home, forbade to act
By those,—who so they keep intact,
Each movement disavow,—
E'en still with ev'ry pledge disclaimed,
—His words disowned,—his actions blamed,—
He hardly murmurs now.

And must we wait and see him die?—
Must we perforce stand tamely by—
—All impotent to aid?—
Can aught avail to save him still?—
Is there yet time?—A Nation's will
Is wont to be obeyed!

OPTIMISTIC LIFE.

Life is joyous, Life is free,
Varied as the azure sea
With its changeful tides and breezes,
Yet its aspect ever pleases:
Sometimes solemn, dark, and grave,
Rocking to the languid wave,
Telling of the tempest brewing,
But to be the calm's renewing
When the cloud the stillness nursed
To the threatened storm shall burst,
And with many a clap of thunder
Seek to part the seas asunder. . .
Then the forces that were rife
Fade upon the scene of strife,
And a sunny peaceful quiet
Sinks upon the Ocean's riot,
And the billows cease to heave,
And the angry storm-clouds leave,
And the silence seems so holy

One would wish the storm, that solely
Might obtain such state of bliss
By a contrast such as this.
Were it always calm and smooth
It would lack its power to soothe;
Even pleasure, how e'er lasting,
Tastes the better for a fasting:
Such is human nature born
That that's cherished must be gone
Before its fullest worth we learn
And fitly value its return.
Every pain must have its joy,
Too much pleasure would but cloy;
Toil,—though painful,—toil is pleasure,
Since by it we cherish leisure:
Life is built of joy and pain,
Both attend its fleeting reign,
One complaint attends the mixture—
—That it is not made a fixture,
But must fade in Death away
At the time of Life's decay.—
Life, some say, is full of sorrow,
And its joys are vain and hollow,
—Is Life necessary then?—

Death awaits the beck of men.
If distasteful, cast it off!
Bid the evil spirit forth!
Then, if thou believ'st in Heaven,
Will thy Soul be Sorrow's leaven,
Or, if thou dost think in Hell
Suicides must surely dwell,
Thither then thou art contracted,
Evil wished's as bad as acted.
Yet 'tis true the Pious say
Men are in an evil way
Who enjoy Life's empty pleasures
And attempt to cull its treasures.
Rather, say they, Life is bad,
And its whole surroundings sad,
Tis a trivial bond and fetter
Only borne to lead to better;
But if ye will bear it bravely,
Then these sages tell ye gravely,
There's eternal bliss in store
Recompense for what ye bore.
Rather, say I. 'Be contented,
They have never yet repented
Who sipped the sweets this Life had grown,

Nor for the shadow dropped the bone.'
Life, they say, is of God's making,
Surely then 'tis worth the taking,
Judging by a human mind,
Could thoughts Eternal be divined,
Who Life's joys gave no denial
Would best deserve a second trial;
For the sanctimonious priest
Who denied himself the feast
Might e'en sniff at Heaven's rapture
Angling for a further capture. . .
Yes! To all is Life a blessing,
And its pleasures worth caressing!
Look at Nature fair and bright
Steeped in floods of purest light!
Hear the happy feathered nation
Warbling thanks for their creation!
See the corn and leafy trees
Bending to the evening breeze!
Hear the rustle and the murmur
As the evening shades grow firmer,
Till at last a settled sleep,
Sinks on forest, shore, and deep!
See the stars, and moon uprisen

Half above the dark horizon;
Then say Life is false and vain,
And I answer. ''Tis thy brain
Which Education has diseased
Until it simply can't be pleased.'

CHANCE.

Muffle the bells! Let Memory toll the dirge,
And tune the mind to Melancholy's throb
For him forever gone!
Let pagan chimes no sexton urge,
But let each rising sob
Heaving in mournful cadence, ebb and surge
In Grief's impulsive dawn.

So thou art dead.—Passed like a dream away,—
—A dream whose sweet remembrance saddens me
That it should be a dream.—
—A drop of purest brightness merged for aye
In deep Oblivion's sea,
Into whose tideless gulfs at Death's decay
Time rolls his endless stream.—

Man's life is as a raindrop's. From the cloud
Which in the dim beginning wrapp'd him round,
Blurr'd in the misty whole,
He glides with Being's gift endowed
Through airs where storms abound,
Till fading Memory weaves his shroud
And Death receives his Soul!

How like a droplet leaves pale cloudland's clime!
—Glistens a moment in the sun of Life,
And feels the fretful blast;
Then, darkening, fades in Death sublime,
And sweeps from earthly strife
A fleeting dimple on the stream of Time
To the Ocean of the Past!—

How slight Man is, from this Man might have guessed;
No great comparisons can show his state
That swell his empty pride,
The frailest similes do fit him best
And match his paltry Fate;
The life of Man is fitly thus expressed,—
He lived; and wondering, died.—

He lived.—On what faint chance did being hang!—
—His mother met his sire.—Their parents too,
Before had met in love;—
And to that cause from which those parents sprang
Each ancestor was due.—
Yes! Man must own with many a pride born pang
'Tis Chance that rules above!

Chance,—the great Deity of human life,—
Philosophers may lie, and say thou art
Sequence ill-understood;
Thou guid'st our course through paths where woes are rife,
—The cause of every smart!—
Thou turn'st to placid groves the streets of strife,
—The cause of every good!—

And yet thou art not, all-pervading Thing?—
—Thou hast no power o'er human life's estate
To stretch or curb its span?—
Tell't not to me! I hold thou art a King,
—Ruler of life, and fate,—
Swaying with every breath, with careless swing,
The littleness of Man.—

Oh, had I uttered but one single word
Or more, or less, upon that fateful day
When last I saw the dead,
That mournful moment had not now occurr'd,
Chance had turned Death away,
The changed events the time of doom deferr'd,
And Life had reigned instead.

Oh, had I given one more parting kiss,
Waved one more farewell, wept one burning tear,
More than the deed had known,
The dead's mourned voice we should not miss,
Though from its earthly bier,
Bound for the mythic realms of cloudless bliss
Myself's free soul had flown!

Yea, such a despot is this ruler Chance,
He makes each helpless child unwitting kill
Friend, foe, and stranger, all:
A word, a nod, the merest glance,
May change the thoughts and will;
A whispered sound, a buzzing gnat's advance,
May be the hearer's pall.

Each day fresh courses by the million show:
Man chooses blindly, and from course to course
Gropes his dark way along,
One leads to pleasure, and the next to woe,
Though so alike their source,
None can the one from other know
Or tell the right from wrong.

Oh, had we missed one action in the Past,
—One simple thought or deed however slight,—
How had our paths been changed!
Nay reader start not back aghast,
But, by these words I write
My pencil a fresh die has cast,
And Life is rearranged!

Existence is: we beings know not why,
We taste sensation in a world forlorn,
Then pass we know not where;
By chance we live, by chance we die,
By greater chance are born,
Great Man's whole life is as a fleeting sigh
Dissolving into air!

LIFE—A DREAM.

One summer's day, high o'er the Ocean's strand
I walked in pensive mood. The turf around,
With dotted eyebright gleamed; my clumsy feet
From sturdy patches of luxuriant thyme
Expressed the fragrant scent. Yet I was sad.
—The towering cliff,—the sullen Ocean's roar,—
—The glorious sun in noon-day radiance calm,—
—The might of Nature in her majesty,—
Oppressed my burden'd soul. But though oppressed,
Its sadness yet was sweet, its pain was joy. . .
Full on the topmost summit of the cliff,
Where rising turf a grassy hillock made,
I lay me down and thought. The murm'rous roar
Of chafing pebbles 'neath the long smooth swell
Swam in the summer air. No soul was near:
It was a scene of Nature as she was
Before the time of Man. Entranced I mused;
And Earth, and Heav'n, and Life, in sequence owned
Possession of my mind. I thought on Death,

The Future, and the Past: whence all things came,
The dim Beginning, and the darker End,
My mind in reverie limned. The mystic spell
Still deeper bound my soul. More faint, and blurr'd,
Still dimmer, grew the sense. I fell asleep.
Yet all-continuous still, the train of thoughts
Continued in a dream. . .
Lo! And I stood
Hard by an ancient temple;—old and strange,—
Of massive pillars of grey granite stone,
Which, towering vast in uncouth sculptury,
Reared up the mountain side. But all was still:
And o'er the porch an old-world legend ran
In unknown characters. I gazed in awe:
And then I saw a venerable man,
With white beard flowing to his ancles bare,
Propp'd on a staff of gnarled oak's knotty root,
Who beckoned me; and as I looked at him
He bade me venture in. Strange words he spake,
And I in strange replied: yet though first heard,
Their import then I knew, and followed him. . .
Through vasty halls of polished marble bright
I followed and he led;—through galleries

Hewn in the solid rock, which yet were light
Though there no taper burned. On, and still on,
Through many a labyrinth, and dubious maze,
My hoar conductor passed; till, with a sign
He bade me stop, and grasped my arm, and led
Me to a giddy edge. . . There all in front
A mighty vault of sparkling adamant,
Rift each way to the heavens, opened out.
Forth up the misty chasm vapours rolled
From Nadir to the Zenith, slow, and grand;
And as my sight accustomed to the glare
I felt constrained to speak. With hollow voice,
Not knowing what I said, I thuswise spake.
"Immortal Spirits!—Ye who guide the world
'Of human littleness;—Ye Essences
'For whom the mist of Fate resolves itself
'In forms as yet unborn,—for whom the Past
'Unrolls the scroll of Time.—Ye at whose nod
'Unfurl the secrets of the Universe,—
'Vouchsafe to hear the humble prayer of one,
'A lowly child of Earth. My mind's unrest,
'Amidst my wisdom's ever widening growth,
'Makes deepening shadows spread. I cannot tell
'If that I am, or am not. If I am;

'Of what composed? What is my destiny,
'And my relation to the world at large?
'My mind is steeped in doubt: to Ye I plead
'To lay the mist that cramps my sight, and would
'Know my just place in Nature. Here on earth
'High lord of all I stand, and with your aids
'Have bowed all forms beneath me. Yet I see,
'In twinkling myriads, all around me shine
'Unknown and mighty worlds. How many they!
'What lies beyond those hosts? In that still space,
'Where toiling sight must now aweary sink,
'Nor pierce the dark impenetrable veil
'Of wall-like blackness born of distance vast,—
'In that, were placed my home, would still beyond,
'—For ever on through unknown realms of night,—
'Stretch the star-spangled firmament? Or say,
'Is that the limit, from whose tottering verge
'The soul appalled looks forth into the depths
'Of the black gulf of dark eternity?"
With that, methought, the walls asunder burst,
Though they stood shiftless to the curious sight,
And opposite a Voice of Thunder spake
In mighty accents forth. . . "I answer thee.

'It would. It is not. All yon starry skies
'Are but as dewdrops on a thistledown
'Midst the wide world that is. Thou see'st a part
'Of one grand Whole: that part how wondrous great!
'How far beyond thy slight imaginings!
'Inscrutable, profound, and dark to thee!
'How then that Whole, which, to thy feeble mind,
'Seems built of contradictions! Gauge thyself:
'Ponder thy natural worth: then how should'st thou,
'A feeble unit midst a world of noughts,
'Evolve the mighty sum! Unlike thyself,
'Unlike thy fixed ideas, thou canst not weigh
'Such mighty thoughts with facts deduced from Earth.
'—A Whole unborn, undying, limitless,
'So all-pervading that it fills the gulf
'Of empty Nowhere, and those deeper depths
'Which Thought alone can plumb;—a boundless thing,
'Which no beginning and no ending hath,
'Whose outer confines lead the vent'rous mind
'Midst such a mazy wilderness, it tires;
'For when in view it seems the border lies,
'That desert, not a desert, widens out,

'And numb, surprised, the baffled thought, which yet
'In fancy saw a land where nothing was,
'Still in the centre stands."—The accents ceased.
The voice was loud and grand, yet passionless,
And calmly cold. But scarce the echoes died,
Which for a time adown the bright abyss
Reverberating ran, than forth afresh,
Another voice, in clear sonorous tones,
Appalled the hearer thus. "Ambitious Man!
'Midst what immensities thy visions soar!
'How far beyond thy sphere! Curb thy wild thoughts.
'Thou art. What thing that is, could ever tell
'The reasons whence it sprang? Thy boldest minds,
'With the proud theories that they venture forth,
'But probe the secrets of the Universe,
'As some poor snail, half timid, and half bold,
'With dubious horn in cautious movement thrust,
'Scans thy slight human world. Thy wish is vain.
'Were I to tell thee of the worlds beyond,
'And in its details limn each wondrous realm,
'Thou couldst not comprehend. And how shouldst thou,
'So small and trivial midst the whole so vast!"

I heard and trembled. Then my comrade spoke,
And bade me be of cheer. I turned to him.
An hour-glass held he in his hand, from which
The sand coursed down apace. He motioned it,
And bade me speak, and trifle not with Time.
Obediently, I answered pensive thus.
"Small?—Trivial?—Yes. O'er my awakening mind
'That sad eclipse of further knowledge creeps,
'And o'er my grandest thoughts such shadows casts,
'They darken ere they form. Oh, happy state,
'When in the morning of my reason's growth
'Things were but as they seemed! When to the brain
'The beauteous smallness of the distance owed
'No dull perspective rules; but when alone,
'Full in the foreground of my vision's ken,
'Myself stood Lord of all; and thronged around,
'Celestial wonders joyed my wistful eye
'And throbbed the brain with thoughts of majesty
'Which from its smallness sprang. Alas, 'tis gone!
'And now amidst a wilderness I stand,
'Lost in the vastness of the world of space,
'As some small ant amidst the desert shores

'Of great Sahara wild. . . That outer world,
'Are its components real and tangible?
'Are they grave facts, or but the phantasies
'Of that I call my mind? Or is it that
'Distorted visions fill the human world;
'—Firm images, inverted, changed, and vexed,
'Which to events bear correlation true,
'But not exact, but by a natural law,
'Warped by the medium that transmits the sense?"—
Again I paused: again that awesome voice
Resounded through the cavern's misty breadth
And shook its crystal walls. This time I knew
The voice of Science, and in reverence bow'd,
Listened with 'bated breath. The accents thus.
"Thyself exists: thyself doth tell thee so.
'If not, thou thinkest not; therefore thyself
'Could not conceive thou wert not, nor to me
'Address thy conscious prayer. If thy mind is,
'A mind to thee exists; and to thy mind
'A complex form of Matter binds itself.
'If Matter is not, thou art not; for thou
'Art formed of Matter, so thy mind declares.
'Therefore, if thou dost think aught thing is real,
'Thyself is real, and all things else are too:

'For if thou think'st thou art a phantasy,
'Tis but a phantasy doth think thee so.
'Thy knowledge must be relative, and if
'Thou art not, neither then thy thoughts can be.
'Something there is:—'nothing can come of nothing:'—
'Where something is, from something *that* has come:
'That consciousness exists, none can deny;
'For if denying, then their reason's void,
'Unconscious of the lines of argument.
'Thou feel'st a conscience and thou know'st it real;
'—How know it real, if not thyself art such?—
'If real thyself, Matter is real, and Mind,
'And round thee shines an Universe of one,
'Within thee of the other, where alone
'Itself can find itself." Faint sank the sound;
It ceased. The second voice took up the tale,
And Reason spoke aloud. "View things at large.
'The sophistry of self on self is vain:
'Such petty details weary out the mind:
'Expand thy thoughts; grasp in the Universe;
'Winnow the facts that bear upon thy theme,
'Sift, measure, weigh, and from the mighty whole
'Extract the average. If things seem real,

'And uniformly all things to thy mind
'Bear always like results; then they are true,
'And thou art real, and all the world is real;
''Tis Reason tells thee so. Those who deny,
'Deceive themselves, and ultra-sceptic grown,
'Slight their true thoughts and doubt for doubting's sake."

I gathered heart, and eager spoke my mind.
"Myself is real. External things exist:
'And so the image that my brain doth paint
'Must have existence too. But is it true?
'Do things in Nature bear the shape and form
'The eye conveys the brain?". . . Th' impassive voice
The awful silence broke, and thus replied.
"The facts are there, but how those facts are read
'Must vary as the reader. Thy one race,
'Although alike in outward semblance formed,
'Yet varies in itself: two sects there are,
'To which the tints on Nature's canvass spread
'Seem strange and opposite. Could each but glance
'For half a moment through its neighbour's eyes,
'Oh, how the world would change! What simple things

'Would then yield place to strange monstrosities!
'If Sight alone can such a difference show,
'What must the Mind,—that strange Auroral force
'Built on the focus of the rays of sense;—
'Which owes its being to the five conjoined,
'Yet which each separate sense must shade and mould
'With corresponding character? How then
'Must facts seem changed. And midst the myriad shapes
'Of Nature's Universe, the separate minds,
'Each different as the form to which conjoined,
'Must differ in their thoughts. And canst thou say,
'—Thou, one of myriads in the world of space,—
'The rest are colour blind? The facts exist;
'But as they seem to thee in their effects,
'They to none other seem. Th' effect is thine.
'Thy powers of sense in the transmission change
'The facts to suit thy mind; they cannot give
'But what thy mind can take; and all that comes,
'Must come through channels biassed humanly."

My mind grew warm. I ventured to reply;
And thinking o'er the doubts that vexed my brain
Amidst the cares of life; to be resolved,

I spake as follows. "In our state of Life
'Two things make up the Man,—the body formed
'Of Matter,—and those finer essences
'Which some men call the Soul.—Can one exist
'Without the other? Are they separate?
'When dieth the body, can the Soul then roam
'Amidst the Matter of the Universe?
'At that dread parting doth the Soul retain
'Its self-existence, or amidst the whole
'Of one vast airy spirit-ether merge?
'Is it the Soul doth form a nucleus,
'And, as a magnet midst the dust of iron,
'Draws Matter to itself; till some great power,
'Stronger than it, doth break the being up,
'Set free the force, and leave the Matter, dead,
'To decompose into its elements
'Whose chains the Soul had bound?
'Doth the Soul progress as the body doth?
'Is it immortal in itself; or but
'In substance, as the grosser body is?
'Am I composed of dual elements?
'—Of Mind and Matter?—or is one a sham,
'Which on itself the other doth impose?
'In mesmerism, second-sight, and trance,

'The Mind doth leave the body: instinct too
'Proclaims them separate, and but conjoined
'To make the 'Ego' up. What too is Sleep?
'And does that strange, yet common, least known, Death
'Blight everlastingly?". . . . With that, methought,
A heavy silence fell; till my old guide
Uplifted high his hand, and signed in air
Some mystic symbol of portentous might.
With that the light broke stronger from the rock,
And now again the Voice of Science spoke.
"All-daring Man, I had not answered thee,
'But that to Time my secrets all must bow,
'Sapped by the energy of Ages' toil,
'Some things thou canst not know, e'en in the way
'That all thy knowledge is. The Infinite,
'The great Commencement, and the Reigning Power,
'Are things beyond thy ken. But thy poor Soul
'Is simply formed; all open lies its course,
'Which nakedly doth show its mode of growth
'To every searching eye. Thou know'st thyself
'Thy frail material form is small and slight
'Midst Nature's awful compass; how shouldst then

'The mighty power that thou dost give thy Soul
'Keep company with it. Be sure each one
'Is well proportioned to its bondfellow.
'—A reservoir of glorious spirit force,
'And when thou diest, thy soul is reabsorbed
'In the primeval ether!—Pretty tale!
'Poetic, pleasing, false! Poor paltry Man
'Who dislikes blotting out; dream on! Dream on!
'Build thy air castles with the coloured lights
'That tint the rainbow's rim! There pass thy life.
'But when the structure fades, and in its place
'Scowls the dark thunder-cloud, then blame not me! . .
'But Instinct whispers; 'Death is but a change:
''Thou art immortal and, dost live for aye!'
'Doth Instinct tell of Death? No! Reason doth:
'For Instinct prompts '*Thy* body will not die'
'But Reason tears this Instinct's garb aside,
'And, lo! there stands, false, trembling, wistful, Hope,
'The arch-deceiver; Disappointment's dam.
'True Science owns no theories built in air
'Whose sole foundations are their pleasantness.
'Look thou around. 'Tis Matter meets thy sight,
'And things material flourish everywhere.
'The properties of substance thou dost know

'In part. How many, strange, and various, they!
'Thy body owns the laws of chemistry,
'Built up complex of many laws besides.
'Thou see'st how Matter under different laws
'Produces strange results. How crystals grow
'In one unwearied form. How Gravity
'Can act through Emptiness. How Heat can cause
'The flow of Motion, and that peerless force,
'Strange Light least understood. Thyself, the last,
'Can cause that grand and highest attribute,
'The force of Life. All Nature's forces blend
'In even sequence up the scale of power,
'And differ in result. In Nature 'round,
''Tis Gravity gets Heat. From these there spring
'Motion and Light. The simpler forces are
'Attendant upon Matter.—Those more high
'Depend more on conditions, and the last,
'Great Life, in such a slender balance lies,
'It perishes on change. The next remov'd,
'Strange Electricity, produces Light,
'Heat, Sound, and Motion,—all but Life,—and that
'It imitates in all its lowly forms.
'Yet thou, as living, in the force of Life
'Detect some super-subtle element.

'I am not bound to tell thee if such is.
'It may be true. It is a secret Time
'Will never wring from out the depths of Truth
'By any human brain. But when Life is;
'How thou hast come is clear:—grown by the laws
'Peculiar to all Life,—that wondrous pair,
'Self-preservation and Heredity.—
'Amidst the sequences of those two laws
'Stand foremost mind and sight. The senses are
'But as the lenses to converge the rays
'Which in the head piece paint the photograph.
'The brain is but the sensitive to take
'Impressions from without. Development,
'To guard the being from an injury,
'Has formed a third,—the Mind.—Upon the brain,
'The images, and their effects, are stored;
'The Mind connects the two. And when a train
'Of fixed events doth always follow one,
''Tis by experience when *that* appears
'The Mind predicts the rest. Sleep is the state
'In which the senses, numb with day-time's use,
'Rest, to arise revived. They then are dead
'To normal things around. The brain, left still,
'Needs idle too, unless the wandering Mind,

'With image upon image, fancy piled,
'Stamps there its empty dreams. Most often though,
'The Mind, shut off from fresh external facts,
'Exhausts its airy theme soon after sleep
'Has closed the senses up. Imperfect sleep,
'When some blunt sense, not wholly numb, can yet
'Transmit impressions, most abounds in dreams.
'But Death!—The body shrivelled to decay,
'The organs changed and all sensation gone—
'—The blearèd eyes no longer own the light,
'Nor the deaf ears the sound—The brain will pass
'Into its elements;—and yet the Mind
'That weaves the solid prints that dot the brain
'Into its airy fabrics, lives for aye!
'Man! Thou art Matter, and thy Soul is but
'The dreamy track of evanescent force!"
Sharp burst the Voice of Reason through the mist
And these dread accents fell. "Presumptuous Man!
'Thou seek'st the truth before thou well canst grasp
'Its mighty meaning. Get thee back to Earth:
'Thou art not ripe for Nature's secrets yet,
'And in the Hall of Truth I tell thee so.
'Thy Mind deludes itself; and in its hopes

'Of Immortality but conjures up
'Fine phrensies baseless as the mirage thin
'Which greets the eye of sun-parched traveller
'In Afric's desert bare. He is as thou
'Amidst the Universe: he waits but Death;
'And, in his hopelessness, vain thoughts of bliss
'Toy with his feeble brain. He knows them false:
'Yet for the pleasure that its falseness gives
'He cherishes the dream. Ephemeral thing!
'Like him, thy whitened skeleton shall mark
'The track of endless Time. Go back and wait.
'All force resolves itself. The natural end
'Of earthly Life is Death; and thy poor Soul
'Must meet the doom of Nature. Back and wait
'The blighting spell of the eternal grave!". . .
With that, methought, the walls together rushed,
And in a flash of blinding brightness passed
Without a sound away. Then all was dark:
And presently I waked. The Moon burst forth:
And clear above me shone down nakedly
The cold impassive stars. I roused me up.
The evening air was still. I slowly walked
In meditation down the grassy slope
That led me to my home. The dew fell fast.

There was a sense of cheerful warmth on earth,
A coldness in the sky. I seemed to feel
A gentle breath, as if the Earth had sighed,
Go upwards into Space. And then I thought,—
Can Death be such?—My body, like the Earth,
Is vexed and changed with seasons; youth, and age,
And troublous storms, make it their battle-ground;
Then, at the parting, may my Soul expand
As is the sky, all limitless,—serene
In calm beatitude?—Thus argued Hope;
My dream but answered 'Nay! Remember me!'
Sweet scents hung in the air. High o'er my head,
In countless myriads, the bright orbs of Space
Twinkled in Heaven's dark domed canopy;
And as I mused, the restless sea below,
With its soft surges, soothed my soul's profound
With thoughts of sadness past. Yet naught I saw:
No shadows met my eye; no sounds my ear;
I merely thought: 'Can such be,—Is this,—Life?' . .

HAECKELIANA.

The professor sings.

Although I use words full six syllables long,
And my meaning is weak, but tautology strong,
I'm sure I'm a poet by nature;
Just listen, I pray, to the soul-stirring lay,
Which is certain, I'm sure, to make every one say
—'That's a precious well backed candidature.'—

Be it known that I trace *your* birth;—you—the reader:—
At first you're an egg;—or I rather believe a
Small one-celled, quite spherical, quasi-Amœba.—
—That's when you were NOT:—or perhaps I should say,
Before that eventful, thrice glorious, day,
When the Spermatozoon, alias Zoospermium,
(Excuse me I took a long time in thus learning 'em)
Was injected on Uterus, Egg-duct, and Ovulum,

Into, and onto, all round 'em, and over 'em. . .
The Spermatozoa,—funny, Tadpole-like, particles,—
Very soon wriggled into these last mentioned articles: . .
—After they wriggled in, 'twas *you* wriggled out—
And that's how the matter came about! . . .
But, before you escaped in that elegant way,
You went through some changes I may as well say.
When they thus fertilized you,—a poor simple cell,—
You lost your Germ Vesicle;—why, I can't tell;—
A Monerula then, you became straight a Cytula,
—Indeed, these queer changes became quite habitular;—
Nucleus, Nucleolus, and what not, you lost,
In your strange creepy movements entirely engrossed;
Successively Cytula, Morula, Blastula,
You finally turned to a rum-looking Gastrula!
Then your Germ Layers split!—And while you yet feared,
Your Horn Plate, Skin Muscle, and Kidney, appeared,
All jumbled and mixed,—though in beautiful order,—
With Medullary, Intestines, Aorta, and Chorda.
One time like a Worm;—Amphioxus the next,—
By your own gradual changes involved and perplexed,

What you are you don't know ;—what you may be's uncertain—
Fish ? Bird ? Beast ? or Reptile ? shut up in a curtain !—
—A Fish now you aren't ;—whatever you may be,—
—A Tortoise, Dog, Chicken, Cow, Rabbit or Baby,—
Your gills have dried up : now your eyes are too small
For the Tortoise and Chicken ; and now too withal
Your swollen pot-stomach proclaims you a mammal,
Be it Horse, Cat, or Pig, Man, Monkey or Camel !
Now your limbs are more grown :—why you're getting some fingers !—
Though your caudal appendage still painfully lingers;
So you aren't a hoofed animal :—may be, a Rabbit,
A Monkey, or Man, may your carcase inhabit.—
Now your tail's disappeared ! Well I'm d——d !
—Yes, it may be !—
I'm hanged if you ain't a real live squalling Baby ! !

THE END.

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